

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1172

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS CREATES LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL

CINCPAC FOR POLAD, PASS AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN

REF: MANILA 871

SUMMARY. ON JAN 21 PRESIDENT MARCOS ISSUED PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 877 APPROVING FORMATION OF NEW ASSOCIATION OF SANGGUNIANG BAYANS WITH PERMANENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CREATING LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL TO PERFORM FUNCTIONS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR DURATION OF MARTIAL LAW. DECREE MENTIONS POSSIBILITY OF COMELEC SUPERVISED ELECTIONS FOR SANGGUNIANG BAYAN MEMBERS BUT DOES NOT SPECIFY TIMING. MARCOS HINTED HE MIGHT AMEND CONSTITUTION TO ELIMINATE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ENTIRELY. HE ALSO SEEMED TO DOWNGRADE REFERENDUM AS MEANS OF ASCERTAINING NATIONAL WILL. THE ASSOCIATION OF SANGGUNIANG BAYANS DELIVERATIONS WERE OCCASIONALLY REMINISCENT OF THE OLD CONGRESS. CAUSTIC COMMENTS ON THIS PERFORMANCE IN THE GUIDED PRESS SUGGESTED MARCOS WAS NOT AMUSED AND FINDS EVEN SHAM OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IRKSOME. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS ADDRESSED SOME 3300 REPRESENTATIVES

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TO FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF ASSOCIATION OF SANGGUNIANG

BAYANS AT FOLK ARTS THEATER AFTERNOON JAN 21. BEFORE HE SPOKE PRESIDENT RECEIVED RESOLUTIONS URGING HIM (A) TO APPROVE NEW NATIONAL SANGGUNIANG BAYAN ASSOCIATION (KATIPUNAN NG MGA SANGGUNIANG) WITH PERMANENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, (B) TO ALLOW SANGUNIANG BAYAN MEMBERS TO REMAIN IN OFFICE FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR, (C) TO CREATE A LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL (SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA) AND NOT CONVENE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNTIL MARTIL LAW ENDED. MARCOS, WHO HAD TOLD GOVERNORS AND MAYORS DAY BEFORE WHAT HE WANTED SANGUNIANG BAYAN MEETING TO ACCOMPLISH, SIGNED PD 877 INCORPORATING THESE RESOLUTIONS WITH EXCEPTION THAT THEIR TERM IN OFFICE IS DESCRIBED AS "INTERIM IN NATURE." HE SUGGESTED VAGUE POSSIBILITY OF ELECTIONS, INDIVIDUAL OR GENERAL, TO REPLACE POORLY PERFORMING SANGGUNIANG BAYAN MEMBERS.

2. KATIPUNAN EXPECTED MEET ANNUALLY. LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL MAY MEET MORE FREQUENTLY. KATIPUNAN PRESUMABLY WOULD PUT STAMP OF APPROVAL ON GRASS ROOTS VIEWS COLLECTED THROUGHOUT YEAR BY ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHEREAS SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA WILL HAVE "ADVISORY LEGISLATIVE POWERS" ON LOCAL AND NATIONAL MATTERS. MARCOS SAID HE COULD CONSULT KATIPUNAN'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON URGENT MATTERS AND SAID HE WOULD ACCEPT ALL RECOMMENDATIONS OF SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA TO EXTENT POSSIBLE. MEMBERSHIP OF KATIPUNAN WILL BE DERIVED FROM LOWER LEVEL SANGUNIANG BAYANS; MEMBERSHIP OF LATTER MAY INCLUDE CABINET, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, NEDA, SANGGUNIANG BAYANS AND CIVILIAN "SECTORS," NOTABLY NOT FORMER POLITICIANS PER SE. VALENCIA SUGGESTS LATTER MEMBERSHIP MAY NUMBER 130, AND MEET IN OLD CONGRESS BUILDING.

3. MARCOS SAID HE WOULD BE FORCED TO CONVENE INA WHEN MARTIAL LAW TERMINATED BUT SOUNDED UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT PROSPECT. HE SAID HE WOULD ETERMINE WHETHER TO AMEND CONSTITUTION (AND ELIMINATE ITS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROVISION) AFTER OBSERVING SANGGUNIANG BAYANS IN OPERATION.
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4. ALL MORNING DAILIES JAN 22 (BUT ESPECIALLY EXPRESS) STRESSED OLD SOCIETY ELEMENTS SURROUNDING ONE DAY MEETING. YOUTH BARANGAY REPRESENTATIVES CLAIMED BEEFY OLD PLS BLOCKED MICROPHONES AND WOULD NOT ALLOW THEM TO SPEAK. THERE WERE COMPLAINTS ABOUT GOVERNORS DOMINATING SESSION AND ABOUT PLETHORA OF "SAME OLD FACES." EXPRESS EDITORIAL GROANING OVER

THESE ASPECTS OF MEETING WAS ENTITLED "MEET NEED NOT
BE ALL SOUND AND FURY SIGNIFYING NOTHING."

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT LOOKED AND SOUNDED SOMEWHAT
BORED DURING PROCEEDINGS. HIS SPEECH, WHICH HAD BEEN
BILLED AS REPORT TO NATION WAS LACKLUSTRE AND
CONTAINED LENGTHY AND FAMILIAR JUSTIFICATION OF MARTIAL
LAW. MARCOS COMMENTS ON INA SOUND AS IF HE IS LEANING
TOWARD AMENDING CONSTITUTION TO ELIMINATE ASSEMBLY
ENTIRELY. SIMILARLY PRESIDENT SEEMED TO BE WRITING
OFF OR AT LEAST DOWNGRADING REFERENDUM AS CHOSEN
MEANS OF CONSULTATION WITH THE BODY POLITIC. HARSH
CRITICISMS OF ANTICS OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE SANGGUNIAN
BAYAN IN GUIDED PRESS SUGGESTS PRESIDENT WAS IRRITATED
BY POTENTIAL FOR CRITICISM AND DISRUPTION (IN HIS EYES)
PROVIDED IN THIS CAREFULLY CONTROLLED FORUM. FACT
THAT MARCOS FINDS CHARADE OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HE
HIMSELF CONTRIVED WEARISOME SAYS MUCH ABOUT EFFECT
THREE YEARS OF ABSOLUTE POWER HAVE HAD ON HIS CHARACTER.
WE SHALL COMMENT IN MORE DETAIL WHEN WE HAVE TEXT OF
SPEECH AND DECREE (BOTH STILL UNAVAILABLE) AND ALSO HAVE
HAD CHANCE TO REVIEW NEW SOCIETY SCHOLIASTS COMMENTARY
ON THE MASTERS LATEST TEXT. STULL

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